

THE EVIDENCE CONCLUSIVE.

MAINE EXPLOSION EXTERNAL
TESTIMONY TAKEN BY THE COURT OF
INQUIRY.

THE FACTS RELATED BY CAPTAIN SIGSBEE, HIS
OFFICERS AND THE DIVERS SHOW THAT
THE DISASTER COULD NOT HAVE
BEEN DUE TO ANY INTERNAL

CAUSE--THE POSITION
OF THE SHIP NOT
CHANGED

Washington, March 28.—The immense mass of testimony taken by the Maine Court of Inquiry was sent to the Senate to-day with the President's Message, and, with the findings of the Court, was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations. The testimony was taken on eighteen different days, the fourteenth day, however, being devoted to viewing the wreck. Every witness who was known to have any information that could throw light upon the great disaster was called to give his testimony. The story of the destruction of the vessel is told, not graphically, but in a manner which gives all the obtainable facts. No technical detail is omitted. Every movement and incident connected with the Maine from the time she left Key West until the last diver examined the wreck, slowly sinking in the mud of Havana Harbor, is given.

It is a story intensely interesting to the American people. Those who read it can have little doubt as to whether there was an internal or external explosion. Perhaps the most significant testimony is that showing the bottom plates on the port side of the ill-fated Maine to be bent inward and upward, a result that hardly could have followed anything save an explosion from the outside. A mass of testimony is submitted showing the care exercised on board the ship by Captain Sigsbee and his officers, and the apparent impossibility of the accident occurring by any internal cause, such as the heating of the bunkers, spontaneous combustion, or from other causes upon which so many theories were based.

The testimony of Captain Sigbee is of the greatest importance, and is, perhaps, of more general interest than that of any other man called before the Board. With great care and minuteness he gives an account of the management of the ship, how she was handled, what was done from day to day on board, how she sailed into Havana, her anchorage and what he knew about it, and in fact every point upon which the Government and the country desires to be informed. Nothing in Captain Sigbee's testimony shows that the anchorage was changed or that it was considered dangerous by any one.

Second to the importance of the testimony of Captain Sigbee is that of Ensign Powelson, who had charge of the divers, and knew from day to day what these divers found. This officer was minutely informed as to the construction of the Maine and everything about her. His testimony was, to a certain extent, technical, bearing upon the construction of the ship, her plates, etc., but it was from these plates and this technical knowledge that he was able to declare that the explosion took place from the outside.

The divers, Morgan, Olsen and Smith, all contributed important evidence. They testified that the plates were bent inward on the bottom port side and outward on the starboard side.

The story of the explosion is told by different witnesses and adds little to what Captain Stagg and Commander Walnright related.

Nothing in the testimony fixes responsibility. No conspiracy is apparent, no knowledge of the planting of a mine is shown. The late Stagg states that a somewhat bitter feeling existed against the American ships and Americans generally, and a witness, whose name is suppressed, tells of overhearing a conversation between two men dedicating a force.

Spanish officers and a citizen possessing knowledge of the destruction of the Maine and an intention to blow her up. An official of the American Consulate tells of information received anonymously tending to show that a conspiracy existed. But nothing is definitely stated which fixes any responsibility upon Spain or her subjects.

THE TESTIMONY IN DETAIL
OFFICERS OF THE MAINE, DIVERS AND
OTHERS BEFORE THE COURT
OF INQUIRY.

Washington, March 28.—The most important features of the testimony taken by the Maine Court of Inquiry are as follows:

CAPTAIN SIGSBEE'S STORY.

Captain Sikes, in testifying before the Court of Inquiry which convened in the Harbor of Havana Monday, February 21, said that he assumed command of the Maine on April 10, 1897, and that his ship arrived in the harbor of Havana the last time January 24, 1898. The authorities at Havana knew of the Maine's coming. Consul-General Lee had informed the authorities, according to Sikes' testimony. After he took on an official salute from the Captain of the Port at Havana, the ship was berthed in the Spanish man-of-war anchorage off the Mochina, or the S. S. Shears, which, according to his understanding, was one of the regular buoys of the place.

He then stated that he had been in Havana in 1872 and again in 1878. He could not state whether the Maine was placed in the usual berth for men-of-war, but said that he had heard remarks since the explosion, using Captain Stevens, temporarily in command of the Ward Line steamer City of Washington, as authority for the statement that he had never known in his experience, which covered visits to Havana for five or six years, a man-of-war to be anchored at that buoy; that he had rarely known merchant vessels to be anchored there, and that it was the least-used buoy in the harbor. In describing the surroundings when first moored to his buoy, Captain Sikes stated that the Spanish man-of-war Alphonso XII was moored in the position now occupied by the Fern, about two hundred and fifty yards to the north and westward of the Maine. The Spanish ship Gulesnauc was anchored at the berth now occupied by the Spanish man-of-war Regapie, which is about four hundred yards about due north from the Maine. He then located the German man-of-war Charlotte, which came into the harbor a day or two later, which was anchored to the southward of the Maine's berth about four hundred or five hundred yards.

THE LIGHT OF THE EXPLOSION.

In describing the surroundings at the time of the explosion, Captain Sigbee stated that the night was calm and still. The Albatross XII was at the same berth. The small Spanish dispatch-boat Segapagos had come out the day before and taken the berth occupied by the German man-of-war, the Griese, a man, which had left. The steamer City of Washington was anchored about two hundred yards to the south and the cutter Albatross XII was to the north of the cutter. The Maine cabled at Keokuk, Iowa, taking on about one hundred and fifty tons of coal being regularly inspected and taken from the Government coal pile. This coal was placed generally in the forward bunkers. No report was received from the chief engineer that any coal had been too long in the bunkers, and that the first alarms in the bunkers were sensitive.

Concerning the regulations regarding inflammables and paints, Captain Sigbee testified that the regulations were strictly carried out in regard to stowage, and that the waste was also subjected to the same careful disposition. As to the situation of the paintroom, he fixed it as in the "eyes of the ship," just below the deck beam, the extreme forward compartment. As for the disposition of inflammables, they were stored in wooden chests, according to regulations, and when inflammables were kept in the bathroom of the admiral's cabin, they were in a wooden chest capacity they were

Regarding the electric plant of the Maine,